

## General Education Retreat: Explore Courses

**Purpose and Objective:** The “Explore” component of the UCCS General Education Curriculum is aimed at exposing students to a breadth of disciplinary approaches, perspectives, and methods. To this end, the courses that satisfy this component are meant to provide a broad level of understanding within a particular discipline. Students would be required to take 3 courses (3 credits each = total 9 credits)—but each one of those courses would be from a different category—pushing them to explore disciplinary perspectives in order to gain a breadth of knowledge.

**Structuring the Explore Curriculum:** The four broad category concepts we have developed are rooted in the traditional academic divisions (arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences), but expand on them to include courses offered by the professional colleges as well.

### Broad Categories Concepts: OPTION 1 “Discovery” Concepts

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|------------------|--|
| A. Expression    | → “Arts, Creative Writing, and Foreign Languages”                    |
| B. Enlightenment | → “Humanities and Cultures”  |
| C. Engagement    | → “Social Sciences, Business, Criminal Justice, and Health Sciences” |
| D. Exploration   | → “Natural Science, Engineering, and Nursing”                        |

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### OPTION 2 “Adventurer” Concepts

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| A. Creator    | → “Arts, Creative Writing, and Innovation”                           |
| B. Traveler   | → “Humanities, Cultures, and Languages”                              |
| C. Pathfinder | → “Social Sciences, Business, Criminal Justice, and Health Sciences” |
| D. Pioneer    | → “Natural Science, Engineering, and Nursing”                        |

### Why re-frame the Explore Curriculum?

- ▶ Re-frames the “Area Requirements” and “distributed list” in a student-centered, learner-centered way
- ▶ Allows students to take courses across UCCS colleges as part of their GE
- ▶ Intentionally highlights the different ways that knowledge is produced, analyzed, and discussed by articulating different disciplinary methods
- ▶ Creates rigor, intentionality, coherence, but maintains a high degree of flexibility for faculty and students

### Where are the intentionality and coherence? Guidelines for Explore Curriculum

- ▶ All courses within the university-wide Explore Curriculum would also be asked to adhere to some general guidelines based on their specific “category” in order to ensure breadth of experiences, approaches, and methods.
- ▶ Guidelines are meant to introduce the learner to how knowledge is acquired within the field, and to find ways to apply this knowledge to the undergraduate learning experience as a whole.

### Sample guidelines of what Explore Curriculum courses could be asked to include:

- ▶ Knowledge of the essential terminology, concepts, and topics of the discipline
- ▶ Skills, concepts, analytical tools, and/or basic research methods for engaging within the field

- ▶ Opportunities for students to practice foundational skills, such as writing, oral communication, or qualitative and/or quantitative reasoning, among other possibilities, within an applied context
  - ▶ Discussion, methods, and direction for assessing data and claims to new knowledge
  - ▶ Presenting ways to evaluate claims to knowledge outside the discipline (interdisciplinary perspectives) using the knowledge gained within the course
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**Faculty Conversation Table Discussion and Written Feedback Form**—please provide written feedback based on your ideas and conversations.

- ▶ Table Discussion: Which “option” do you prefer: Option 1 “Discovery” Concepts or Option 2 “Adventurer” Concepts? Please explain your preference. Would you suggest any changes to the broad disciplinary categories listed under each?
  
- ▶ Table Discussion: In your opinion, how difficult would it be for you to address these sample guidelines in some of your existing courses?
  
- ▶ Are there modifications or additions that you would suggest to these sample guidelines? Please provide suggestions and examples.
  
- ▶ Would you support some version of the Explore Curriculum idea as a way to re-frame the breadth requirement of university-wide GE? Please explain.